

**Assembly Joint Resolution**

**No. 69**

**Introduced by Assembly Members Matthews and Maldonado**  
(Principal coauthors: Senators Machado and Poochigian)

March 11, 2004

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 69—Relative to specialty crops.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 69, as introduced, Matthews. Specialty Crops.

This measure would respectfully request that the Congress of the United States of America support the passage of HR 3242, the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act of 2003.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Rapid conversion of California's farm and ranch  
2 lands for nonfarm use has contributed to the state's increased  
3 dependence upon imported food; and

4 WHEREAS, According to the National Agricultural Statistical  
5 Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, 3.7  
6 million acres of farm land (more than 10 percent of total farm land)  
7 was lost between 1990 and 2003; and

8 WHEREAS, Increased dependence upon imported foods has  
9 created increased vulnerability to exotic pests and diseases,  
10 evidenced by 63,527 shipments of prohibited commodities  
11 intercepted and destroyed or shipped back out-of-state in 2002;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, According to the California Department of Food  
14 and Agriculture's (hereafter CDFA) January 2004 report  
15 Protecting California from Biological Pollution, interception of

1 quarantined pests at point-of-entry is the state's primary defense  
2 against the introduction and spread of biological pollution; and

3 WHEREAS, Every dollar spent on early intervention against  
4 exotic and invasive species, on average prevents seventeen dollars  
5 (\$17) in later expenses, as seen by the following:

6 (a) CDFA Plant Health Pest Prevention Services spent two  
7 hundred fifty-eight million dollars (\$258,000,000) to eradicate  
8 Mediterranean fruit fly infestations between 1980 and 1996. Just  
9 four million four hundred thousand dollars (\$4,400,000) has been  
10 spent since the Medfly Exclusion Program was launched in 1996.

11 (b) CDFA Animal Health & Food Safety Services in 2002  
12 reported that Exotic Newcastle Disease, the most fatal viral disease  
13 known to birds, required more than 3.4 million birds to be  
14 destroyed at a cost of more than three million six hundred thousand  
15 dollars (\$3,600,000) to California and one hundred sixty-six  
16 million four hundred thousand dollars (\$166,400,000) to the  
17 federal government.

18 WHEREAS, Pest and disease prevention and exclusion is  
19 critical to all states of this nation and to our populations, in order  
20 to protect the health and welfare of the public and the jobs within  
21 agriculture and its related industries; and

22 WHEREAS, The California Legislature recognizes the  
23 importance of the partnership between federal and state  
24 governments to protect California's food and fiber from exotic  
25 pests and diseases, and the importance of promoting the role local  
26 agriculture has in supporting the daily living needs of all  
27 Californians and United States citizens; and

28 WHEREAS, The Legislature recognizes the farm worker's  
29 importance to agriculture production and the dependence of rural  
30 economies on agriculture; and

31 WHEREAS, The California Legislature recognizes the role the  
32 United States Congress played in delivering the 64 million dollar  
33 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture in 2001,  
34 which was the basis for the Buy California Initiative promoting  
35 California Grown products; and

36 WHEREAS, The California Legislature recognizes the value of  
37 federal funds available to support important programming  
38 including the Western Institute for Food Safety managed by the  
39 University of California at Davis; the 5 A Day For Better Health  
40 Nutrition Education Campaign managed by the state Department



1 of Health Services; and the Linking Education, Activity and Food  
2 (LEAF) Program managed by the state Department of Education;  
3 and

4 WHEREAS, The California Legislature believes that there is a  
5 need, but no state funding, to expand programs that integrate food  
6 nutrition and schools, including, but not limited to, local fresh  
7 fruits and vegetables in school lunch programs, and educating  
8 school officials about on the seasons of state grown specialty  
9 crops; and

10 WHEREAS, The United States Congress currently is  
11 considering HR 3242, the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act of  
12 2003; and

13 WHEREAS, HR 3242 would continue the essential federal  
14 funding that started in 2001 that helped to support California's  
15 increasingly challenged food and fiber production infrastructure  
16 with the tools necessary to support food and fiber security,  
17 nutrition, and education; now, therefore, be it

18 *Resolved by the Assembly and Senate of the State of California,*  
19 *jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California respectfully  
20 requests that the Congress of the United States of America support  
21 the passage of HR 3242, the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act  
22 of 2003; and be it further

23 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
24 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United  
25 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the  
26 Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and  
27 Representative from California in the Congress of the United  
28 States.

